

# Priory Hurworth House

Westfield Drive, Hurworth-on-Tees, Darlington, County Durham DL2 2AD

## Inspection dates

20–22 November 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders and managers have ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.
- Senior leaders evaluate their school accurately.
- Leaders and managers have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders ensure that pupils develop outstanding personal development through a range of very successful strategies.
- Most pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress across a range of subjects.
- Although attainment is often lower than that of other pupils of the same age, some pupils make outstanding progress and reach age-related expectations.
- Teachers develop good relationships with pupils.
- Most teachers use a range of successful strategies to engage pupils in learning.
- Pupils' behaviour improves rapidly after joining the school.
- Successful strategies have been used to improve attendance, which is now close to the national average.
- Governors are well informed about every aspect of school life. They use this information effectively to maintain school improvement.
- Teaching delivered by teachers and teaching assistants in the primary department is not consistently strong.
- New members of the senior leadership are not yet fully effective.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the primary department so that it is consistently stronger by ensuring that:
  - adults know when to intervene and when to allow pupils to think for themselves
  - teaching assistants are focusing on what pupils are learning and not just the final learning outcome
  - key academic vocabulary is emphasised during lessons and adults model appropriate language use
  - when used, writing frames are used appropriately so that they support learning and do not restrict what pupils can achieve
  - an element of further challenge is carefully planned into more lessons.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that all new members of the senior leadership team rapidly become more effective in their roles and responsibilities.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Through regular monitoring and moderation, senior leaders know their school well. They plan well to improve weaknesses that they have identified, and attendance, for example, is now close to national averages.
- Pupils take part in a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities which adults plan to match pupils' interests. Pupils take part in fishing and golf as well as regular lunchtime clubs, such as the film and debating clubs. These activities have supported pupils' outstanding personal development.
- A well-planned personal, social, health and economic education programme and religious education lessons support pupils' learning about different religions and cultures. They learned about Yom Kippur in an assembly. Themed days, such as 'human-rights day' and 'freedom of information day', help pupils learn about British values that are consistently reinforced every day.
- The regular monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders and by other schools in the Priory Group have supported improvements in teaching and learning.
- The assistant headteacher gathers information on pupils' progress from sources such as tests and work in books to firmly establish the progress pupils make. The analysis of this information contributes to identifying areas for improvement for the school as well as for individual pupils and teachers.
- Staff feel very well supported by school leaders and comment that the 'SLT lead by example' and that 'staff are supported effectively in their development of understanding students' needs'. Staff have access to an employee assistance helpline.
- Some members of the senior leadership team are new to post and still developing their roles and, consequently, are not fully effective.

### Governance

- Governors are extremely well-informed about what is happening in the school. Regular, detailed reports from senior leaders give them information about every aspect of school life. This allows governors to plan strategically so that pupils' academic and welfare needs are well met.
- Governors ensure that regular quality assurance from governors and senior leaders from other schools verifies the findings in the senior leader's reports. They regularly challenge information given with 'deep dive' monitoring where they look in greater depth at a school improvement area or if actions taken have not been as effective as expected.
- The governance structure of Priory Education Services is known by all involved, and accountability processes are clear.
- The board of governors ensures that several schools in the company meet regularly to support school improvement by sharing good practice and supporting each other in training events.
- All leaders and managers ensure that regular monitoring means that the independent

school standards are met.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, records are detailed and channels of communication are good.
- Staff receive high-quality training frequently. Four staff have full designated safeguarding lead (DSL) training. Leaders carefully consider the context of the school, for example when considering safeguarding training needs, the current emphasis is on 'Prevent' training.
- Senior leaders follow company policy regarding risk assessments and health and safety procedures, which ensures that pupils' welfare is promoted well.
- The operations manager completes regular and thorough risk assessments of alternative providers to ensure that when pupils are away from the school site their safety is considered.
- DSLs liaise effectively with other agencies, including the local authority and the police, to help safeguard pupils. Regular, twice-daily, staff briefings mean that pupils' welfare needs are considered on a very regular basis and action taken immediately as appropriate.
- Governors ensure that the safeguarding policy takes account of government requirements, is kept up to date and is available on the school website.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers quickly build good relationships with pupils so that they feel more confident at learning new things again.
- Teachers use a wide range of different strategies, including mnemonics, to get pupils to participate in learning. Some teachers in the primary department do this extremely well. Pupils were observed successfully learning about matching fractions with chocolate chips and dominoes and, in literacy, matching explanations such as simile and adverb on large coloured sheets of A4.
- Teachers in the secondary department make excellent use of immediate and flexible intervention strategies to meet the changing emotional and learning needs of pupils so that little learning time is lost.
- Senior leaders have ensured that transition arrangements meet individual needs. Teachers support these arrangements well by planning learning accordingly.
- Teachers, particularly in the secondary department, use well-established routines to help pupils meet expectations of learning.
- Pupils do not learn as well in some classes in the primary department, because the quality of teaching is not as strong. For example, key vocabulary is not consistently reinforced, and when writing frames are used this can restrict what some pupils can achieve. Some adults do not give pupils time to think for themselves. Therefore, pupils have little time to consider what they are learning because they are focusing on the finished product.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding as senior leaders have placed great importance in promoting this aspect of pupil's development.
- Pupils' outstanding personal development allows them to be better prepared for moving onto places of further education, training or employment by the time they leave the school. Occasionally, pupils' outstanding development allows them to be able to return to mainstream education. Two pupils accomplished this last academic year.
- A range of therapists work closely with pupils, and adults who support them, in delivering plans that promote pupils' personal development very well.
- Arrangements for pupils' transition between the different departments and other transitions, for example to local colleges, are exceptional. This careful planning supports pupils growing ability to function successfully in new surroundings.
- Senior leaders recognise the importance of pupils learning how to keep themselves safe. Consequently, pupils take part in a great deal of learning about safety, for example learning about first aid, the effects of alcohol on the body, road safety, anti-bullying and 'Prevent'.
- The operations' manager has ensured that all ages of pupils have access to a variety of information and impartial advice about qualifications and subsequent career choices to help them make informed decisions.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils rapidly improve their behaviours after joining the school so that they can engage in learning again.
- The assistant headteacher has successfully promoted the consistent improvement in attendance due to the introduction of bespoke provision to promote better attendance. Attendance is now close to the national average at 91%.
- Adults manage pupils' behaviour consistently well and, consequently, new pupils have little negative influence on the behaviour of others.
- Senior leaders have introduced a clear strategy for rewards, which has successfully encouraged pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Over time, the number of behavioural incidents has reduced. Due to a new no exclusion strategy introduced by senior leaders, negative behavioural incidents have very recently risen. However, following careful monitoring, appropriate strategies are being introduced to deal with this very recent increase.
- There are still some pupils who do not make the progress that they are capable of, and this is partly due to their complex emotional and learning needs and their poor attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils generally have low levels of attainment due to the amount of time most pupils have spent out of education and learning. Most pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress across a range of subjects. Occasionally, pupils reach levels of attainment that are close to age-related expectations by the time they leave the school.
- The number of pupils who are making good and outstanding progress in English and mathematics has consistently improved since the last inspection. This has been due to successful strategies such as immediate interventions and new specialist teachers.
- Pupils who left the school in 2018 had all achieved a range of accredited qualifications, including brickwork and agriculture qualifications as well as English and mathematics.
- Fifty percent of pupils attending the school aged between 14 and 19 years last year had, at some point during the school year, attended college provisions or work-based placements.
- In 2017, 100% of pupils, and, in 2018, 88% of pupils who left the school at the end of their academic career went into further education and training. Good transition arrangements and outstanding personal development has helped pupils in being well-prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Some pupils in the primary department do not make the strong progress that is seen across the rest of the school as a direct result of the quality of teaching.

## School details

Unique reference number	137511
DfE registration number	841/6006
Inspection number	10053831

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	Sharon Pearson
Headteacher	Claire Blackett
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,800–£79,763
Telephone number	01325 729 080
Website	<a href="http://www.priorygroup.com">www.priorygroup.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:claireblackett@priorygroup.com">claireblackett@priorygroup.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–5 November 2015

## Information about this school

- Priory Hurworth House School accepts up to 67 pupils aged between 5 and 19 years with complex social and emotional needs. Pupils attending the school at the time of the inspection were between Years 3 and 13.
- The school has two discrete departments. The primary department currently has 17 pupils between Years 3 and 8. The secondary department currently has 33 pupils on role between years 8 and 13.
- At times, older secondary-aged pupils attend work-based placements and other education providers. Occasionally, pupils are educated at other sites, with the school's education

staff, on a temporary basis.

- At the time of the inspection, four pupils were attending alternative education providers. No pupils were on work-based placements.
- The school currently uses Middlesbrough College and Darlington College as alternative education providers.
- All pupils currently attending have a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils have previously disengaged from education, and the school aims to provide pupils with an environment where they feel safe and are willing to engage in learning again.
- The school was last inspected in November 2015, when it was judged to be good in all aspects.
- The school strategic governance is through a governing body, who then report to the Priory Education Group company board. None of the members of the governing body are members of the company board.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two and a half days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- The inspector held meetings throughout the inspection with all members of the senior leadership team. The inspector met with directors of the Priory Education Group, who acted as representatives of the chief executive officer.
- The inspector spoke with pupils, both informally and formally, about their work and their well-being. The inspector also heard pupils read while they were learning in lessons. The work in all pupils' books was considered across all subjects.
- The inspector spoke to two representatives from placing local authorities.
- Seven responses to Parent View were received, but not enough to show the results of this questionnaire. Four parents and carers responded to the Ofsted online text service. Twenty-six responses to the staff questionnaire were received. All these views were considered.
- The inspector toured the school's buildings, inside and out, to check whether the relevant independent school standards are met and that pupils' welfare is taken into account.
- A range of documentation was examined by the inspector, including policies, the record of safeguarding checks and other safeguarding documentation. All documentation relating to the independent school standards were studied and their implementation and effectiveness considered.

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### Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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